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Message Text

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ORIGIN PRS-01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 296938 TOSEC 120158

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: MORNING TRAVELLING PRESS SUMMARY, DECEMBER 13

NO. 19

WIRES

UPI -- ANDERSON FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE, UNSUCCESSFUL IN HIS BID TO PERSUADE JORDAN AND LEBANON TO ATTEND THE CAIRO PEACE TALKS, TODAY ASSURED SYRIA THE US IS COMMITTED TO COMPREHENSIVE MIDEAST SETTLEMENT."

OTHER POINTS:

-- AT AIRPORT, VANCE RESTATED US POSITION AND SAID CARTER
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HAD ASKED HIM TO DISCUSS WITH ASSAD HOW THEY COULD WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE.

-- VANCE PRAISED SYRIAN-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP AND STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ASSAD AND KHADDAM. VISIT TO SYRIA EXPECTED TO BE "TOUGHEST AND MOST CRUCIAL LEG OF TRIP."

-- EARLIER, HE MET WITH SARKIS IN BEIRUT AND SAID AFTERWARD IT UNLIKELY ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRY WOULD JOIN CAIRO CONF.

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-- SAID HE ENCOURAGED BY FACT EVERYONE HE HAS TALKED TO HAS COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN GENEVA AS OBJECTIVE.

-- DISCUSSED OVERALL MIDEAST PROBLEM WITH LEBANESE LEADERS, AS WELL AS SITUATION IN LEBANON ITSELF. PROMISED US AID TO HELP LEBANON REBUILD FROM CIVIL WAR.

REUTERS -- NO BYLINE FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE ARRIVED HERE TODAY FROM BEIRUT ON 5TH STOP OF HIS 6-NATION MIDEAST TOUR."

OTHER POINTS:

-- IN BRIEF STATEMENT TO REPORTERS, VANCE STRESSED US COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF MIDEAST CONFLICT, SAID US ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH SYRIA.

-- EARLIER, IN BEIRUT, VANCE SAID IT WAS NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT MORE COUNTRIES TO JOIN CAIRO TALKS.

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-- OFFICIAL SYRIAN NEWSPAPER DENOUNCED US SUPPORT FOR CAIRO TALKS AND US SOURCES SAID VANCE WAS GOING TO DAMASCUS WITHOUT HOPE OF PERSUADING SYRIA TO CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE.

-- LEBANESE PREMIER AL-HOSS SAID VANCE HAD NOT ASKED LEBANON TO JOIN CAIRO MEETING.

AP -- NO BYLINE FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE, MAKING THE FIFTH STOP OF HIS SIX-NATION MIDDLE EAST TOUR, FLEW TO SYRIA TODAY FOR ALKS WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD ABOUT ASSAD'S REJECTION OF EGYPTIAN PEACE OVERTURES TO ISRAEL."

OTHER POINTS:

-- SYRIA WILL BOYCOTT CAIRO TALKS, AND, ACCORDING TO KHADDAM, "WILL NEVER BE DRAGGED INTO A POSITION OF SURRENDER."

-- IN BRIEF ARRIVAL STATEMENT, VANCE STRESSED US DESIRE FOR COMPREHENSIVE MIDEAST PEACE, AND SAID CARTER HAD ASKED HIM TO DISCUSS WITH ASSAD HOW THEY COULD WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL.

-- ASSAD AND OTHER REJECTIONISTS FEAR CAIRO CONF MAY

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RESULT IN SEPARATE PEACE, DESPITE REPEATED DENIALS BY SADAT.

-- VANCE FLEW TO DAMASCUS AFTER THREE-HOUR STOP IN BEIRUT FOR WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY A COURTESY CALL ON SARKIS, SINCE LEBANON IS EFFECTIVELY BARRED BY SYRIAN OCCUPATION FROM JOINING CAIRO TALKS.

SMALL SEPARATE STORY ON AP WIRE DESCRIBES SQUABBLE
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BETWEEN LEBANESE ARMY AND POLICE AT GATES TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. DESCRIBES "FURIOUS ARGUMENT" AS SOLDIERS POINTED ANTIAIRCRAFT GUN AT POLICE ESCORT CAR.

NEWSPAPERS

NY TIMES -- GWERTZMAN FROM AMMAN

LEAD: "KING HUSSEIN, AFTER CONFERRING WITH SECSTATE VANCE, SAID TODAY THAT JORDAN WOULD STILL NOT ATTEND THE PRELIMINARY PEACE TALKS THAT ARE TO BEGIN ON WEDNESDAY IN CAIRO, BUT HE LEFT OPEN THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT JORDAN WOULD JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN OVERALL ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT 'AT A LATER STAGE, POSSIBLY IN GENEVA.'"

OTHER POINTS:

-- IN NEWS CONF, KING SAID HE MORE OPTIMISTIC AS RESULT OF TALKS WITH VANCE AND RECENT MIDEAST DEVELOPMENTS. VANCE HAS ALSO BEEN OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR CAIRO MEETING LEADING TO COMPREHENSIVE ACCORD.

-- VANCE NOW AT HALFWAY POINT IN HIS TRIP AROUND MIDEAST. IN FIRST PART, HE ENSURED IN EGYPT AND ISRAEL THAT CAIRO WOULD NOT BE COVER FOR SEPARATE PEACE, BUT RATHER A VEHICLE FOR NEGOTIATING SET OF PRINCIPLES WHICH COULD BE TRANSLATED INTO PEACE TREATIES. IN SECOND PART, HIS GOAL IS TO KEEP ALIVE INTEREST IN OVERALL SETTLEMENT; HE HAS ALREADY ACKNOWLEDGED HE WILL HAVE PROBLEMS IN SYRIA.

-- HUSSEIN, WHO HAS INDICATED SYMPATHY WITH SADAT'S ACTIONS, HAS ASSUMED A MEDIATION ROLE IN ARAB WORLD; HE SAID TODAY JORDAN WOULD CONTINUE TO STAY AWAY FROM CAIRO
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AS LONG AS SYRIA DID, SINCE THE "SACRED DUTY" OF KEEPING THE ARAB WORLD FROM SPLITTING PERMANENTLY APART IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ATTENDING CAIRO.

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-- VANCE (NOTE ATTRIBUTION) HAS PREDICTED THAT JORDAN WOULD JOIN NEGOTIATIONS IN CAIRO AT LATER STAGE AND THAT SYRIA WOULD JOIN WHEN NEGOTIATIONS WERE FAR ENOUGH ALONG TO WARRANT CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE.

-- HUSSEIN SAID HE BELIEVED SADAT WAS DEVOTING ALL HIS TIME AND ENERGY TO SEARCH FOR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, THUS CONTRADICTING SYRIANS AND SOVIETS, WHO HAVE ACCUSED SADAT OF SEEKING SEPARATE PEACE.

-- SOME SYRIANS HAVE SAID THEY WERE OPPOSED TO GENEVA AS WELL AS CAIRO; HUSSEIN, HAVING CONFERRED LAST WEEK WITH ASSAD, SAID HE DIDN'T BELIEVE GENEVA WAS RULED OUT.

-- VANCE PLEASED WITH HUSSEIN'S POSITIVE OUTLOOK; US OFFICIALS BELIEVED KING WAS TRYING TO FIND WAY TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS. THEY SAID VANCE TOLD HIM ISRAELIS WERE CAUGHT UP IN NEW MOOD, AND WERE READY TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE IN DEALING WITH WEST BANK.

WASH POST -- RONALD KOVEN FROM AMMAN

LEAD: "KING HUSSEIN SAID TODAY HE IS WILLING TO SIGN PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL IF IT WITHDRAWS FROM TERRITORIES IT OCCUPIED IN 1967 WAR AND RECOGNIZES RIGHTS OF PALES-TINIAN PEOPLE."

OTHER POINTS:

-- SAID ANY SUCH TREATY WOULD HAVE TO BE IN CONTEXT OF OVERALL SETTLEMENT.
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-- THIS POSITION NOT NEW, BUT IN CURRENT CONTEXT, HUSSEIN'S

STATEMENT HAD EFFECT OF MAKING CLEAR HIS SYMPATHIES LIE WITH SADAT RATHER THAN REJECTIONISTS.

-- HUSSEIN DID NOT ABSOLUTELY RULE OUT JORDANIAN ATTENDANCE AT CAIRO, BUT LEFT IMPRESSION THIS WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, SINCE JORDAN TRYING TO REMAIN ON GOOD TERMS WITH SYRIA.

-- REPORTERS COVERING TRIP WERE GIVEN IMPRESSION YESTER-DAY JORDAN WOULD JOIN CAIRO TALKS AT RELATIVELY EARLY

DATE. HUSSEIN STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT SADAT WAS ACTING FOR ALL ARABS AND THAT HE HAD NOT PRESSURED JORDAN TO JOIN "PREPARATORY" CAIRO CONF.

-- HUSSEIN EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM, REFUSED TO TAKE SIDES IN SADAT-ASSAD FEUD, SAID THERE WAS MUCH SKEPTICISM IN ARAB WORLD BECAUSE ISRAEL HAD YET TO GIVE CLEAR SIGN

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IT WAS WILLING TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED LANDS AND
RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

-- VANCE SPOKESMAN SAID HE WAS SATISFIED WITH HUSSEIN'S
ATTITUDE.

-- WITH SUBTLE PHRASEOLOGY, HUSSEIN MADE CLEAR HIS BASIC
SYMPATHY FOR SADAT AND HOSTILITY TO PLO.

SEPARATE ARTICLE BY JONATHAN RANDAL FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "SECSTATE VANCE CAN EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER DEEP-SEATED
SYRIAN SUSPICION OF AMERICAN CONNIVANCE IN EGYPT'S GO-IT-
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ALONE DIPLOMACY WHEN HE ARRIVES HERE TUESDAY ON MOST
CHALLENGING STOP OF HIS CURRENT MIDEAST TRIP."

OTHER POINTS:

-- SYRIANS THINK ISRAELIS WILL MAKE NO MEANINGFUL CONCES-
SIONS IN CAIRO, AND TALKS ARE THEREFORE DOOMED TO FAILURE.
THEY SUSPICIOUS OF AMERICAN BACKING FOR SADAT; SPOKESMAN'S
SNAPPISH WARNING THAT VANCE WOULD NOT BE WELCOME IF HE
CARRYING MESSAGE FROM BEGIN SYMPTOMATIC OF SYRIAN ATTI-
TUDE. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA HAS ACCUSED WASHINGTON
OF ENGINEERING CURRENT SPLIT IN ARAB RANKS.

-- ASSAD RETURNED YESTERDAY FROM VISIT TO PERSIAN GULF
STATES, WHERE HE TRIED TO LINE UP SUPPORT FOR HIS POSI-
TION. LITTLE INDICATION OF SUCCESS.

-- OFFICIAL AMERICAN STATEMENTS SUPPORTING CAIRO TALKS
MAY HAVE INCREASED SYRIAN PARANOIA. RECENT COMMENTS BY
VANCE AND BRZEZINSKI TO THE EFFECT THAT CAIRO TALKS MIGHT
REPLACE GENEVA FRAMEWORK WITH CONCENTRIC-CIRCLE FRAMEWORK
MAY HAVE FED SYRIAN FEARS THAT EGYPT MOVING TOWARD
SEPARATE PEACE.

-- SYRIANS EXPECTED TO TELL VANCE US HAS RESPONSIBILITY
TO SLOW DOWN SADAT'S THRUST TOWARD UNDEFINED GOALS WHICH
ARE IN FACT SEPARATE PEACE DEAL. US CREDITED WITH POWER
TO INFLUENCE BOTH SADAT AND BEGIN.

-- SYRIANS SEEM SURE CAIRO CONF WILL FAIL. MOST OPTI-
MISTIC SCENARIO IS FOR FAILURE WITHIN 2 OR 3 MONTHS
FOLLOWED BY SADAT'S REMOVAL AND EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RECON-
CILIATION.

-- PACE OF MIDEAST DEVELOPMENTS SO QUICK THAT IT DIFFI-
CULT TO TELL WHETHER SYRIA OR EGYPT IS MOST ISOLATED ARAB
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POWER. UNLIKE SADAT, HOWEVER, ASSAD HAS MAINTAINED CREDIBLE BALANCE BETWEN US AND USSR, WHICH STILL SUPPLIES HIM WITH ARMS.

LA TIMES -- JOHNSTON FROM AMMAN

LEAD: "KING HUSSEIN RENEWED MONDAY HIS PUBLIC PRAISE OF SADAT'S 'COURAGEOUS' PEACE INITIATIVE BUT TOLD SECSTATE VANCE THAT HE WOULD NOT JOIN THE CAIRO TALKS UNTIL ISRAEL MADE CONCESSIONS IN RETURN."

OTHER POINTS:

-- HUSSEIN'S POSITION CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO VANCE AND AIDES.

-- VANCE TRIP NOW ENTERED WHAT ONE US OFFICIAL TERMED "HAND-HOLDING" PHASE. PARTY WILL VISIT LEBANON TO REAFFIRM US SUPPORT FOR EFFORT TO REBUILD THAT COUNTRY, THEN WILL PROCEED TO SYRIA, WHERE HOSTILITY TO SADAT INITIATIVE SEEMS TO HARDEN EVERY DAY.

-- VANCE GOAL IS TO LAY TO REST SUSPICIONS THAT US DEVISED SADAT OVERTURE TO ISRAEL AND TO REAFFIRM US COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN MIDEAST.

-- IN JORDAN, VANCE FOUND PRIVATE ENTHUSIASM FOR SADAT'S INITIATIVE BUT ALSO GROWING FEAR THAT TALKS MAY FLOUNDER BECAUSE ISRAEL HAS NOT RECIPROCATED.

-- HUSSEIN SAID HE MAY JOIN TALKS WHEN THEY REACH FORMAL STAGE AT GENEVA. US OFFICIALS SAY PRIVATELY THEY EXPECT HUSSEIN TO BE ABLE TO MOVE BEFORE GENEVA CONF, AND WILL UNCLASSIFIED

DO SO ON HIS OWN, WITHOUT ASSAD'S BACKING.

-- VANCE HOPING HE CAN PERSUADE ASSAD TO KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN AND JOIN NEGOTIATIONS LATER ON, PERHAPS AT GENEVA.

-- IN SAUDI ARABIA, VANCE HOPES TO WIN QUIET SAUDI BACKING FOR SADAT, AND AT THE LEAST, SAUDI AGREEMENT NOT TO PRESSURE HUSSEIN TO STAY ALOOF FROM TALKS FOR TOO LONG.

-- VANCE AND AIDES AWARE THAT SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM DEPENDS ON ABILITY OF SADAT AND BEGIN TO KEEP CAIRO TALKS GOING AND PRODUCE RESULTS.

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-- HUSSEIN STRESSED NECESSITY FOR VISIBLE ISRAELI CONCES-
SIONS; MADE IT PLAIN HE WAS READY TO JUMP ON SADAT'S
BANDWAGON AS SOON AS THERE IS EVIDENCE IT IS GOING
SOMEWHERE.

CHI TRIBUNE -- NO MACLEAN

HEARST -- JOHN WALLACH FROM AMMAN
(BOSTON HERALD HEADLINE: "SYRIA'S ASSAD RELENTS, MAY
ATTEND GENEVA TALK")

LEAD: "PRESIDENT ASSAD, THE ARABS' MOST BITTER OPPONENT
OF DIRECT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS, HAS TOLD JOR-
DAN'S KING HUSSEIN THAT SYRIA MAY ATTEND NEW GENEVA PEACE
TALKS IF ISRAEL AGREES TO 'PRINCIPLES' FOR COMPREHENSIVE
MIDEASTERN SETTLEMENT."

OTHER POINTS:

-- POSSIBILITY SYRIA MAY SEND DELEGATION TO GENEVA HELD
OUT BY OFFICIALS CLOSE TO HUSSEIN. KING HIMSELF WAS
TELLING NEWS CONF IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT HE TRY TO RALLY
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ARAB SUPPORT BEHIND SADAT THAN TRY TO SHOW UP IN CAIRO.

-- HUSSEIN ANNOUNCED HE WOULD TRAVEL TO SAUDI ARABIA AND
OTHER ARAB STATES IN NEAR FUTURE TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS.

-- HE WARNED ISRAEL TO GRASP OPPORTUNITY THAT MAY NEVER
OCCUR AGAIN AND MOVE TO RECIPROCATE SADAT'S DESIRE FOR
PEACE BY DECLARING WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW TO PRE-67
BORDERS AND PERMIT PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION.

-- CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC, HUSSEIN LEFT NO DOUBT HE
"ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTED" SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL.

-- MEANWHILE, IN JERUSALEM, DAYAN SAID ISRAEL MIGHT AGREE
TO PARTITION OF WEST BANK IF THAT WAS WHAT ARABS WANTED.
HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT PARTITION SOLUTION HAD BEEN
ADVANCED IN PAST AND WAS NOT CONSIDERED WORKABLE BY
ISRAEL. NEVERTHELESS, ISRAEL WOULD APPROACH QUESTION
WITH OPEN MIND.

RADIO-TV NETS -- NO MORNING COVERAGE OF SECRETARY'S TRIP.
CHRISTOPHER

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